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THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF UTAH

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VICTOR BUCHI,

Plaintiff,

v.

WARDEN POWELL et al.,

Defendants.

**MEMORANDUM DECISION  
& ORDER TO CURE  
DEFICIENT COMPLAINT**

Case No. 2:21-CV-282-TC

District Judge Tena Campbell

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Plaintiff, inmate Victor Buchi, brings this *pro se* civil-rights action, *see* 42 U.S.C.S. § 1983 (2021).<sup>1</sup> Having now screened the Complaint, (ECF No. 4), under its statutory review authority,<sup>2</sup> the Court orders Plaintiff to file an amended complaint to cure deficiencies before further pursuing claims.

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<sup>1</sup> The federal statute creating a “civil action for deprivation of rights” reads, in pertinent part:  
Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State or Territory . . . , subjects, or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws, shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress, except that in any action brought against a judicial officer for an act or omission taken in such officer’s judicial capacity, injunctive relief shall not be granted unless a declaratory decree was violated or declaratory relief was unavailable.

42 U.S.C.S. § 1983 (2021).

<sup>2</sup> The screening statute reads:

(a) Screening.—The court shall review . . . a complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity.

(b) Grounds for dismissal.—On review, the court shall identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint—

(1) is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or

(2) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.

## COMPLAINT'S DEFICIENCIES

The Complaint:

(a) possibly inappropriately alleges civil-rights violations on respondeat-superior theory--i.e., supervisor liability (e.g., Warden Powell).

(b) does not adequately affirmatively link defendants to allegations of civil-rights violations. (See below.)

(c) needs clarification on how to adequately state claim of inadequate medical treatment. (See below.)

(d) lacks recognition that negligence is not federal claim. *See Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976) (holding “inadvertent failure to provide adequate medical care” or “medical malpractice does not become a constitutional violation merely because the victim is a prisoner,” but instead claim may be alleged properly only by alleging “acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to evidence deliberate indifference to serious medical needs”).

(e) does not attempt names or detailed description of John Doe defendants to give the Court a chance to identify them--e.g., names, nicknames, titles, physical descriptions, dates and times of John Doe activities.

(f) possibly asserts constitutional violations--e.g., rude or offensive language--resulting in injuries that appear to be prohibited by 42 U.S.C.S. § 1997e(e) (2021), reading, "No Federal civil action may be brought by a prisoner . . . for mental or emotional injury suffered while in custody without a prior showing of a physical injury or the commission of a sexual act."

(g) names many defendants only in text, not in Complaint's heading.

(h) needs clarification regarding libel and slander causes of action, which are defined in Utah statute as follows:

(1) “Libel” means a malicious defamation, expressed either by printing or by signs or pictures or the like, tending to blacken the memory of one who is dead, or to impeach the honesty, integrity, virtue or reputation, or publish the natural defects of one who is alive, and thereby to expose him to public hatred, contempt or ridicule.

(2) “Slander” means any libel communicated by spoken words.

Utah Code Ann. 45-2-2 (2021).

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28 U.S.C.S. § 1915A (2021).

(i) needs clarification regarding what constitutes cause of action under American with Disabilities Act (ADA). (See below.)

(j) may not name John Doe plaintiffs.

(k) has claims apparently regarding confinement; however, complaint apparently not drafted with contract attorneys' help.

### **GUIDANCE FOR PLAINTIFF**

Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires a complaint to contain "(1) a short and plain statement of the grounds for the court's jurisdiction . . . ; (2) a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief; and (3) a demand for the relief sought." Rule 8's requirements mean to guarantee "that defendants enjoy fair notice of what the claims against them are and the grounds upon which they rest." *TV Commc'ns Network, Inc. v ESPN, Inc.*, 767 F. Supp. 1062, 1069 (D. Colo. 1991).

Pro se litigants are not excused from complying with these minimal pleading demands. "This is so because a pro se plaintiff requires no special legal training to recount the facts surrounding his alleged injury, and he must provide such facts if the court is to determine whether he makes out a claim on which relief can be granted." *Hall v. Bellmon*, 935 F.2d 1106, 1110 (10th Cir. 1991). Moreover, it is improper for the Court "to assume the role of advocate for a pro se litigant." *Id.* Thus, the Court cannot "supply additional facts, [or] construct a legal theory for plaintiff that assumes facts that have not been pleaded." *Dunn v. White*, 880 F.2d 1188, 1197 (10th Cir. 1989).

Plaintiff should consider these general points before filing an amended complaint:

(1) The revised complaint must stand entirely on its own and shall not refer to, or incorporate by reference, any portion of the original complaint or any other document outside the complaint. *See*

*Murray v. Archambo*, 132 F.3d 609, 612 (10th Cir. 1998) (stating amended complaint supersedes original); *McKnight v. Douglas Cty. Corr. Facility*, No. 21-3030-SAC, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 118659, at \*7 n.1 (D. Kan. June 25, 2021) (“An Amended Complaint is not simply an addendum to the original complaint, and instead completely supersedes it. Therefore, any claims or allegations not included in the Amended Complaint are no longer before the court. Plaintiff may not simply refer to an earlier pleading, and the Amended Complaint must contain all allegations and claims that Plaintiff intends to pursue in this action, including those to be retained from the original complaint.”).

The amended complaint may also not be added to by any other document after it is filed without moving for amendment.<sup>3</sup> Instead, all claims and information must be included in an amended complaint, if one is filed. None of the material outside the complaint will be treated as additional claims or defendants by the Court.

(2) The complaint must (a) “name every defendant in the caption of the amended complaint,” *McKnight*, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 118659, at \*7 n.1 (citing Fed. R. Civ. P. 10 (“The title of the complaint must name all the parties . . . .”)), and must (b) clearly state in the body of the complaint what each defendant--typically, a named government employee--did to violate

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<sup>3</sup> The rule on amending a pleading reads:

(a) Amendments Before Trial.

(1) Amending as a Matter of Course. A party may amend its pleading once as a matter of course within:

(A) 21 days after serving it, or

(B) if the pleading is one to which a responsive pleading is required, 21 days after service of a responsive pleading or 21 days after service of a motion under Rule 12(b), (e), or (f), whichever is earlier.

(2) Other Amendments. In all other cases, a party may amend its pleadings only with the opposing party’s written consent or the court’s leave. The court should freely give leave when justice so requires.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 15.

Plaintiff's civil rights. *See Bennett v. Passic*, 545 F.2d 1260, 1262-63 (10th Cir. 1976) (stating personal participation of each named defendant is essential allegation in civil-rights action). "To state a claim, a complaint must 'make clear exactly *who* is alleged to have done *what* to *whom*.'" *Stone v. Albert*, 338 F. App'x 757, (10th Cir. 2009) (unpublished) (emphasis in original) (quoting *Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250 (10th Cir. 2008)). Plaintiff should also include, as closely as possible, specific locations, circumstances, and dates of alleged constitutional violations. *McKnight*, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 118659, at \*7 n.1.

(3) Each cause of action, together with the facts and citations that directly support it, should be stated separately. Plaintiff should be as brief as possible while still using enough words to fully explain the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "why" of each claim. *Robbins*, 519 F.3d at 1248 ("The [*Bell Atlantic Corp. v.*] *Twombly* Court was particularly critical of complaints that 'mentioned no specific, time, place, or person involved in the alleged [claim].' [550 U.S. 544, 565] n.10 (2007). Presented with such a complaint, 'a defendant seeking to respond to plaintiff's conclusory allegations . . . would have little idea where to begin.' *Id.*").

(4) Plaintiff may not name an individual as a defendant based solely on his or her supervisory position. *See Mitchell v. Maynard*, 80 F.2d 1433, 1441 (10th Cir. 1996) (stating supervisory status alone does not support § 1983 liability).

(5) Grievance denial alone with no connection to "violation of constitutional rights alleged by plaintiff, does not establish personal participation under § 1983." *Gallagher v. Shelton*, 587 F.3d 1063, 1069 (10th Cir. 2009).

(6) "No action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under . . . Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative

remedies as are available are exhausted.” 42 U.S.C.S. § 1997e(a) (2020). However, Plaintiff need not include grievance details in the complaint. Exhaustion of administrative remedies is an affirmative defense that must be raised by Defendants. *Jones v. Bock*, 549 U.S. 199, 216 (2007).

**• Affirmative Link – Personal Participation**

[A] plaintiff who brings a constitutional claim under § 1983 can't obtain relief without first satisfying the personal-participation requirement. That is, the plaintiff must demonstrate the defendant "personally participated in the alleged constitutional violation" at issue. *Vasquez v. Davis*, 882 F.3d 1270, 1275 (10th Cir. 2018). Indeed, because § 1983 is a "vehicle[]" for imposing personal liability on government officials, we have stressed the need for careful attention to particulars, especially in lawsuits involving multiple defendants." *Pahls v. Thomas*, 718 F.3d 1210, 1225 (10th Cir. 2013); *see also Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250 (10th Cir. 2008) (explaining that when plaintiff brings § 1983 claims against multiple defendants, "it is particularly important . . . that the complaint make clear exactly *who* is alleged to have done *what* to *whom*"); *Tonkovich v. Kan. Bd. of Regents*, 159 F.3d 504, 532-33 (10th Cir. 1998)) (holding that district court's analysis of plaintiff's § 1983 claims was "infirm" where district court "lump[ed]" together plaintiff's claims against multiple defendants--"despite the fact that each of the defendants had different powers and duties and took different actions with respect to [plaintiff]"--and "wholly failed to identify specific actions taken by particular defendants that could form the basis of [a constitutional] claim").

*Estate of Roemer v. Johnson*, 764 F. App'x 784, 790-91 (10th Cir. 2019).

“A plaintiff’s failure to satisfy this requirement [of pleading personal participation by each defendant] will trigger swift and certain dismissal.” *Id.* at 790 n.5. Indeed, the Tenth Circuit has “gone so far as to suggest that failure to satisfy the personal-participation requirement will not only justify dismissal for failure to state a claim; it will render the plaintiff’s claim frivolous.” *Id.*

**• Inadequate Medical Treatment**

The Eighth Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment requires prison officials to “provide humane conditions of confinement” including “adequate . . . medical care.” *Craig v. Eberly*, 164 F.3d 490, 495 (10th Cir. 1998)) (quoting *Barney v. Pulsipher*, 143 F.3d 1299, 1310 (10th Cir. 1998)). To state a cognizable claim under the Eighth Amendment for failure to provide proper medical care, “a prisoner must allege acts or omissions *sufficiently harmful* to evidence deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.” *Olson v. Stotts*, 9 F.3d 1475, 1477 (10th Cir. 1993) (emphasis in original) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976)).

Any Eighth Amendment claim must be evaluated under objective and subjective prongs: (1) “Was the deprivation sufficiently serious?” And, if so, (2) “Did the officials act with a sufficiently culpable state of mind?” *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 298 (1991).

Under the objective prong, a medical need is “sufficiently serious . . .if it is one that has been diagnosed by a physician as mandating treatment or one that is so obvious that even a lay person would easily recognize the necessity for a doctor’s attention.” *Sealock*, 218 F.3d at 1209 (citations & quotation marks omitted).

The subjective component requires the plaintiff to show that prison officials were consciously aware that the prisoner faced a substantial risk of harm and wantonly disregarded the risk “by failing to take reasonable measures to abate it.” *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 847 (1994). “[T]he ‘inadvertent failure to provide adequate medical care’ tantamount to negligence does not satisfy the deliberate indifference standard.” *Sparks v. Singh*, 690 F. App’x 598, 604 (10th Cir. 2017) (unpublished) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 105–06 (1976)). Furthermore, “a prisoner who merely disagrees with a diagnosis or a prescribed course of

treatment does not state a constitutional violation.” *Perkins v. Kan. Dep’t of Corrs.*, 165 F.3d

803, 811 10th Cir. 1999); *see also* *Gee v. Pacheco*, 627 F.3d 1178, 1192 (10th Cir. 2010)

(“Disagreement with a doctor’s particular method of treatment, without more, does not rise to the level of an Eighth Amendment violation.”).

#### • ADA

Plaintiff should also consider this information in amending his complaint:

To state a failure-to-accommodate claim under [ADA], [Plaintiff] must show: (1) he is a qualified individual with a disability; (2) he was "either excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of some public entity's services, programs, or activities"; (3) such exclusion or denial was by reason of his disability; and (4) [Weber County] knew he was disabled and required an accommodation.

*Ingram v. Clements*, 705 F. App’x 721, 725 (10th Cir. 2017) (quoting *J.V. v. Albuquerque Pub.*

*Sch.*, 813 F.3d 1289, 1295, 1299 (10th Cir. 2016)). Further,

"Courts have recognized three ways to establish a discrimination claim: (1) intentional discrimination (disparate treatment); (2) disparate impact; and (3) failure to make a reasonable accommodation." *J.V.*, 813 F.3d at 1295. "The ADA requires more than physical access to public entities: it requires public entities to provide 'meaningful access' to their programs and services." *Robertson v. Las Animas County Sheriff's Dep’t*, 500 F.3d 1185, 1195 (10th Cir. 2007). To effectuate this mandate, "the regulations require public entities to 'make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability.'" *Id.* (quoting 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(7)).

*Villa v. Dep’t of Corrs.*, 664 Fed. App’x 731, 734 (10th Cir. 2016).

## ORDER

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that:

(1) Plaintiff must within thirty days cure the Complaint's deficiencies noted above by filing a document entitled, "Amended Complaint."

(2) The Clerk's Office shall mail Plaintiff the Pro Se Litigant Guide with a blank-form civil-rights complaint which Plaintiff must use if Plaintiff wishes to pursue an amended complaint.

(3) If Plaintiff fails to timely cure the above deficiencies according to this Order's instructions, this action will be dismissed without further notice.

(4) Plaintiff *shall not* try to serve Amended Complaint on Defendants; instead, the Court will perform its screening function and determine itself whether the amended complaint warrants service. No motion for service of process is needed. *See* 28 U.S.C.S. § 1915(d) (2021) ("The officers of the court shall issue and serve all process, and perform all duties in [*in forma pauperis*] cases.").

(5) Plaintiff must tell the Court of any address change and timely comply with Court orders. *See* D. Utah Civ. R. 83-1.3(e) ("In all cases, counsel and parties appearing *pro se* must notify the clerk's office immediately of any change in address, email address, or telephone number."). Failure to do so may result in this action's dismissal for failure to prosecute. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b) ("If the plaintiff fails to prosecute or to comply with these rules or a court order, a defendant may move to dismiss the action or any claim against it. Unless the dismissal order states otherwise, a dismissal under this subdivision (b) and any dismissal not under this rule--

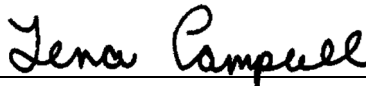
except one for lack of jurisdiction, improper venue, or failure to join a party under Rule 19-- operates as an adjudication on the merits.”).

(6) Extensions of time are disfavored, though reasonable extensions may be granted. Any motion for time extension must be filed no later than **fourteen days** before the deadline to be extended.

(7) No direct communication is to take place with any judge. Any letters, documents, and papers, labeled with case number, are to be directed to the Clerk of Court.

DATED this 28th day of February, 2022.

BY THE COURT:

  
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JUDGE TENA CAMPBELL  
United States District Court